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IN STALIN'S FOOTSTEPS

by Felix Morley

The proposed "Economic Stability Act of 1949" is at the moment resting quietly in the House Committee on Banking and Currency. But the import of this truly extraordinary measure is not minimized by the fact that it is currently receiving little publicity. Its sponsors do not want advertisement just yet.

A close reading of the bill, numbered H. R. 2756, explains why the Administration is not at the moment inclined to invite public scrutiny for this monstrosity of its own creation. The clear purpose of the legislation is to impose a centrally planned economy on the United States. Thus it is the keystone of the gateway to National Socialism, climaxing the program of "civil rights", restoration of the Wagner Act, public housing, social security, socialized medicine, rent control and Federal command of education.

H. R. 2756 was introduced, without fuss or fanfare, by Representative Brent Spence of the fifth Kentucky district, on February 15. Mr. Spence is a reliable Democratic wheel horse who has attained chairmanship of the Banking and Currency Committee by virtue of his ten terms in Congress. This bill of his has no direct relationship to either banking or currency and has gone to that committee merely because a favorable pro forma report can be expected there whenever desired.

It is not impossible that Congressman Spence has read the bill which bears his name but he certainly did not draft it. The preparation of the measure is said to be the work of a small and zealous committee headed by Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan. Hearings will not be requested until the Taft-Hartley Act is well on its way to repeal, and perhaps not unless the filibuster of the Southern Democrats is broken. But, eventually, we shall see the Spence Bill in the headlines.

Since H. R. 2756 runs to 42 printed pages, and is clever as well as unscrupulous, it is suggested that readers of HUMAN EVENTS request their Congressman, or perhaps Mr. Spence himself, to furnish them with copies. It is difficult to name another official document which more clearly reveals the intent of this Administration to develop totalitar-

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ian government. It can also be said with assurance that the more attentively the Spence Bill is examined, the less likely will be the chance of its passage, even by the 81st Congress.

II

Really to understand the implications of this measure, one should be familiar with the way "the great Stalin Five-Year Plan" was put over in Soviet Russia. Consciously or unconsciously, our planners are following procedure utilized by the Russian Communists three years ago.

It is perhaps insufficiently realized that the U. S. S. R. also has a bicameral Congress, much like that of the United States, to which the Council of Ministers -- under the chairmanship of Stalin -- is at least nominally "responsible and accountable". That is the wording in Article 65 of the Constitution of the U. S. S. R., obtainable in an English edition from the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

Article 67 of the present Russian Constitution states that: "Decisions and orders of the Council of Ministers of the U. S. S. R. are binding throughout the territory of the U. S. S. R." But it is to be remembered that this Council is appointed by the Supreme Soviet, which is in turn selected by those whom the Communist Party defines as "citizens". Although non-Communists are now allowed to vote, only loyal Communists can be candidates for office.

The point -- for present purposes -- is that a semblance of Constitutional procedure is carefully maintained in Moscow, as in Washington. Therefore, when it was decided to inaugurate "the great Stalin Five-Year Plan", an enabling Act had to be adopted by both Houses of the Supreme Soviet, divided into a Soviet of the Union and a Soviet of Nationalities. These are respectively representative of voters by election districts and of voters as citizens of the various federated Soviet Republics -- like our House and Senate.

So the present Russian Five-Year Plan was not just ordained by the Kremlin. First it was necessary for the Supreme Soviet to adopt a law promulgating the plan, which was done on March 18, 1946. The Spence Bill is the counterpart of that Russian law.

If one places the text of this Soviet law, of three years ago, side by side with the proposed "Economic Stability Act of 1949" the parallelism in thought and even in wording, is seen to be extraordinary. It is difficult to believe that those who drafted the Spence Bill were unfamiliar with its Communist prototype. It is certainly easy to see that the political objectives of the Kremlin Bill of 1946, and of the White House Bill of 1949, are identical.

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The Soviet Act pays tribute to "our great leader, Comrade Stalin" and authorizes him to delegate the necessary administrative authority to appropriate members of his Council of Ministers. The authorization which the Spence Bill would grant is more impersonal than that of its Communist counterpart. Our pending bill says (Section 104, a):

> "The administration of this Act is vested in the President, who may delegate any and all authority hereunder to such departments, agencies, or officials of the Government as he may deem appropriate."

As soon as the Soviet Act for a Five-Year Plan was adopted, Stalin and his advisors were free to enlarge, modify or alter its provisions as they felt desirable. Let us note the parallel latitude which would be given to President Truman under the Spence Bill, taking the liberty of underlining the key phrases.

Under Section 104 (c): "The President may issue such rules, regulations, and orders as he may deem necessary to carry out the provisions . . . of this Act."

Under Section 201 (a): ". . . the President shall from time to time designate materials or facilities with respect to which he finds that a shortage . . . threatens to affect . . . the national security".

Under Section 204: "Whenever the President determines that it is necessary . . . he may make loans . . . to State governments or subdivisions or instrumentalities thereof, for the expansion of capacity and production. Such loans may be made without regard to the limitations of existing law and on such terms and conditions as the President deems necessary."

Under Section 205 (b): "Whenever the President determines that it is necessary . . . he may . . . construct new plant facilities . . . for the expansion of capacity and production. Such contracts may be made without regard to the limitations of existing law, and on such terms and conditions as the President deems necessary . . . For the purposes of this section, the President is authorized to acquire real property . . . by purchase, lease or otherwise, as he deems necessary."

Under Section 302 (e) (1): "The President may . . . make such inspection of the books, records and other writings, premises, or property of, any person and make such investigations . . . as may be necessary or appropriate, in his discretion . . ."

Under Section 401: "The President may by regulation or order require sellers of any commodity which significantly affects the cost of living . . . to give up to 60 days' notice to the President . . . of

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any intended price increase with respect to any such commodity." This is followed by authorization to fix prices "in the judgment of the President". There is, however, one really humorous safeguard, in section 402. The President shall not "establish maximum prices for a commodity" unless "it is determined by the President" that "the proposed action is administratively feasible".

IV

We have quoted only a few instances of the completely dictatorial power over the national economy which the Spence Bill would vest in the uncontrolled hands of the President. Like its Russian counterpart of three years back this pending legislation bases its case on "national security"; on the "carrying out of the foreign policy of the United States" -- whatever that may be -- and, on the more abundant life.

But the cold, grim fact is that the tyrannical implications of the Spence Bill are worse even than those of the Act passed by the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. three years ago. That legislation at least said with much precision precisely what steps Stalin should take to increase production in specific industries. Under the Spence Bill the blue sky is the limit. Whatever the President says -- that goes.

There is, of course, plenty of eyewash in the Spence Bill. It asks these "emergency powers" for only five years, and for a shorter time in the case of some provisions. A lot of sops are thrown to "small business". Farmers are assured (in Section 405) that they will get parity prices regardless of price controls for industry. Labor is solemnly told (in Section 406 (a)) that the purpose of the "Economic Stability Act of 1949" is not to prevent wage increases "but rather to further the objective of preventing price increases which tend to destroy . . . the value of the wage earner's dollar". It is even provided (Section 406 (c)) that higher wages "may not be considered as an increase in cost of production for the purpose of adjustments in price ceilings . . . until six months after the effective date of the wage increase".

However, there is something doubly horrifying in this attempt to make farmers and labor and small business believe that their freedom will be preserved while free enterprise as such is struck down. As dictators move to assume power they always argue that only the minority will suffer -- that the majority will benefit -- from the tyranny that is planned. So Stalin praised his own Five-Year Plan, when he urged adoption of the necessary enabling law by the Supreme Soviet.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VI, No. 10

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By Frank C. Hanighen March 9, 1949

MOLOTOV: Last Friday some rather absurd convulsions followed the announcement that Molotov and Mikoyan, two of Stalin's cabinet members, were relieved of their duties, and Vishinsky and Menshikov were named to take their posts. Ignorance of the Moscow system made pardonable some of the hasty comments. Yet, one might well pause to recall that Truman also has made two changes in his cabinet in the past few months, without the heavens falling. There are, however, some real reasons why the Soviet action of last Friday was less significant than it seemed to many.

We consulted a former American Communist, a man who once participated in high councils in Moscow and who has watched Soviet internal politics closely for 25 years. We give weight to his comments. "The affair", he remarked, "is vastly overrated and over-publicized. It forecasts no basic change in Soviet foreign policy, nor any shift in the internal power situation. Instead of Molotov being demoted or kicked upstairs to be a figurehead, the move seems to be part of a policy to strengthen Molotov's position as the foreordained successor to Stalin -- when the latter dies. Stalin is growing old and is not well. Molotov is being groomed as his successor. I believe he was relieved of his duties as Foreign Minister in preparation for his eventual assumption of the leadership. Note that both he and Mikoyan remain as Deputy Premiers, that it has not been announced that they have left the two key bodies, the Politburo and the Central Committee. Until some resignations from those two bodies are officially announced, keep your shirt on. I believe that Molotov has a clear course to the leadership, to succeed Stalin when the latter dies. There's no one in the Politburo to oppose him. Of course, if Zhdanov were alive, there might be a conflict. But, Zhdanov had a fine funeral.

"As for Mikoyan, it looks to me as if he's slated to become the Paul Hoffman of the Molotov Plan for 'aiding' the Eastern bloc countries. Vishinsky? He's just an echo (raucous, I grant you) of Stalin and Molotov. His elevation does not necessarily mean any change in foreign policy. Remember also that Vishinsky is neither on the Politburo nor on the Central Committee. After all, he was a Menshevik when Stalin was a Bolshevik -- and the two terms were not exactly synonymous. That may be recalled some day, if Vishinsky has a fine funeral."

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APPOINTMENTS: Two Truman appointments, now on the carpet, hardly increase the President's stature. The naming of Mr. Louis Johnson to the Defense post is political, but in that respect Mr. Truman only follows Mr. Roosevelt. Mr. Johnson, we learn, turned down two other positions offered, insisting on that of Defense. Since he raised the money for the campaign, he got what he wanted. If he had been put at the head of the Post Office, some of the chilliness might have been absent from editorial comments. Perhaps he may bring about unification of the services. Forrestal's record on unification was hardly brilliant, but it would be naive to suppose that this failure prompted the President to ask for Forrestal's resignation. The latter's great political sin was to oppose the ambitions of the Zionists. The recognizable cabals against him were at work long before the unification picture was clear. The upshot was that Mr. Truman met the demands of the very columnist whom he had only recently called a naughty name. Another amusing aspect of the affair concerns Mr. Johnson's recent "big business" connections. Mr. Forrestal was criticized by New Deal columnists because he came to Washington from Wall Street nine years ago. But, it is reported that Mr. Johnson at the time of his appointment represented such "economic royalists" as Pan-American Airways and the Chicago Board

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of Trade. There is no reason why these recent connections should impair Mr. Johnson's conduct of the Defense department. But neither did Forrestal's financial background affect his policies.

The other appointment under fire is that of Mon Wallgren, named to head the National Security Resources Board. The selection is generally considered as no less than appalling. On the Hill, Wallgren displayed neither ability nor industry and was classified as a "play boy". As Governor of Washington, his administration was bad, to put it mildly. So bad, indeed, that the Washington voters retired Wallgren last fall. Here was one Democratic politician who couldn't even ride in on the coattails of the Presidential candidate who himself rode in on the coattails of many local Democratic candidates. As for Wallgren's appointment of fellow travellers and Communists in the state of Washington, his plea of ignorance doesn't hold water, as Senator Cain has pointed out. One is depressed to think of what he might do in NSRB. His confirmation in the Senate has been held up, but not for the highest of reasons. In retaliation for Truman's strategy on the filibuster, the Southerners have lined up (but perhaps only temporarily) against Wallgren.

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ISRAEL: Israel will remain neutral in the East-West "cold war", said a high Israel official to the United Press on March 7. The official, Elias Sassoon of the Israel Foreign Office projected a Middle East bloc composed of Israel and Arab States, "favoring neither East nor West . . . a third world bloc . . . aimed at keeping the peace of the world". Now Israel is a sovereign State and has a perfect right to remain neutral. And this isn't the first time that Israel officials have voiced such sentiments. Ungratefully, they have apparently forgotten that officially the U. S. regards neutrality as a sin (Hull announced this ineffable doctrine during the war). Where are the U. S. officials who -- oh so cleverly -- argued that Israel would prove a more faithful U. S. satellite in the Near East than the Arab States? Where are the noisy zealots, some of them supporters of Zionism, who screamed at Spain, Eire and other nations who remained neutral in World War II? Why are these fanatics against neutrality silent now? Was it for this that all those passionate words were shed on the hustings in behalf of Zionism?

The UP dispatch interests us for additional reasons. Mr. Sassoon went on to say that Israel must have the Negeb, otherwise "we would be obliged to expand either northward at the expense of Syria, or eastward taking the remainder of Palestine still in Arab hands or even parts of Transjordan". Not even Adolf Hitler in his "expansive" days phrased the theme of Lebensraum so baldly. And was Hitler any more racialist than Mr. Sassoon who (according to the UP) "said Israel would not welcome back the Palestine Arab refugees"? He suggested that the Arabs, driven out by the Jews, "resettle" in the Arab part of Palestine. Yes, it's a mad world, my masters.

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SPY AFFAIR: Why anyone should have been surprised by the cops-and-spies episode over the past week end is beyond our comprehension. Mr. Whittaker Chambers, we had imagined, had made the public familiar with the charming custom of Administration employees dutifully delivering Government documents to Soviet agents. Much of the astonishment -- we suspect -- arose from the fact that the receiving end of the chain of documents was this time located in the UN. That organization, as the result of some curious process, has become a sort of totem, untouchable by criticism in the press, or by the profane paws of an investigating legislator. Yet, if the ordinary newspaper reader had paid any attention to the revelations of State Department official Robert H. Alexander last summer, he would have learned that the UN was a most convenient haven for Soviet agents.

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(Mr. Alexander, for his pains, was badly harrassed by his Department superiors.) No, there is no excuse for amazement from any person who reads the newspapers and does a minimum of thinking.

Nor should one miss the irony in the fact that the Department of Justice is involved. Last fall, when the word "red herring" had currency, Attorney General Clark scoffed at Red infiltration in Government departments and subversion by Government officials. "Just name one", he cried defiantly. About that time, Congressman Nixon now reminds us, the House Un-American Activities Committee was trying to warn Mr. Clark that the Foreign Agents Registration Division of Justice (where Miss Coplon labored before she came to her present rest in jail) was infiltrated; and the Committee tried unsuccessfully to subpoena people from that division. The subpoenas were ignored. No one, indeed, should be amazed, although we found one "red-baiter" who was bored. "What do I care about such minor fry", he remarked. "I want to know who the Commies have on the General Staff."

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ACHESON AND FRANKFURTER: Turning to lighter topics, we cannot resist relating the following "talk of the town". Years ago, during World War II, one of the much-publicized features of the morning scene in Washington was the spectacle of Mr. Dean Acheson, then Assistant Secretary of State, and Justice Felix Frankfurter walking downtown together from their homes in Georgetown. Naturally, folk remarked that it was the Justice -- then admittedly the more important figure -- who dominated the conversation, as they strode along Pennsylvania Avenue, his pince-nez glittering in the morning sun. But times have changed. Today, of mornings, a black State Department limousine, draws up in front of the Frankfurter home in Georgetown and through the windows may be descried the prominent mustachios of the Secretary of State. The uniformed chauffeur opens the door for the Justice, and the two officials ride downtown together. There are those, of course, who conclude that now the roles are reversed. But that may not be so.

For instance, in a Senate corridor, recently, we heard a visiting Englishman -- with something to sell in the line of foreign polcy -- remark that he had spent an hour with Justice Frankfurter. On the Americans present (among them several important Senators), there fell the silence of the impressed. Later, one of the Senators remarked, behind his hand, to us, "Why is the Englishman wasting his time on us?" However that may be, Mr. Acheson's demeanor now swells with importance, and we gather that his honeymoon with the press is becoming a bit frayed. One State Department reporter remarked to us with disgust: "Acheson -- a Spanish grandee. A grandee who has condescended to wear tweeds. He acts like he's posing for Velasquez."

People are also gossiping that Justice Frankfurter's sister has gone to Palestine to live, and to become a citizen of Israel. (We recall Miss Frankfurter during the late war, when she performed very efficiently an important job in the State Department.) Hearing the talk, we phoned the Justice's office to see what truth there was to it. Yes, replied the secretary, Miss Frankfurter has gone to Palestine to live. But, when we asked if she could confirm or deny the report that Miss Frankfurter was considering the possibility of taking out citizenship in the new State of Israel, the secretary said that she was not "authorized to comment".

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INCOME TAX: Just an example of the grim sense of humor of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. In what it calls "Helpful Information" for its victims, the Bureau warns: "When your employer deducts taxes, insurance, union dues, savings bond subscriptions, social security, pension fund contributions, community chest, or other items from your pay, these amounts are still part of your wages."

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Book Events

Scott-King's Modern Europe, by Evelyn Waugh. Boston: Little Brown and Company. $2.00. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

The American edition of Mr. Waugh's little satire on contemporary politics seems to have got an almost uniformly bad press; with not many exceptions the reviewers have dismissed it with such epithets as "dull", "disappointing", "trivial" and so on. I have been a little puzzled by this hostility, since the fantasy, when I read it about two years ago in the edition of Messrs. Chapman and Hall of London, seemed to me one of the happier exercises of Mr. Waugh's peculiar wit; and it seems so still, now that I have read it again. The explanation may be that Mr. Waugh has struck at certain comfortable illusions still cherished among us. His book is a kind of Candide in reverse. The lesson derived by Voltaire's hero from his travels was that each man does best to cultivate his own garden, a moral precisely suited to the mechanistic concept of the universe and to the physiocratic concept of Society. But the conclusion reached by Mr. Waugh's hero is that one should have nothing to do with the prevailing ethos, and should indeed resist it to the end.

Scott-King is a classics-master in a minor English public school, a lonely representative of the dying humanist tradition, and the story has to do with his adventures in the quasi-totalitarian world to which everything human is alien and contemptible. At an early period of his life this obscure scholar had become attached by spiritual affinity to the memory of an equally obscure Latin poet of the later Renaissance, called Bellorius, and had translated him into Spenserian stanzas that never found a publisher. Bellorius, it seems, was native to a place called Neutralia, which because our author speaks of it as having once been part of the Habsburg dominions, many reviewers have taken to mean Illyricum, or Yugoslavia, but it seems to be merely Mr. Waugh's imaginary composite of all the post-revolutionary European dictatorships, whether Fascist or Communist. For purposes of propaganda the regime decides to make an international celebration of the tercentenary of Bellorins, whose historical existence has just been discovered by some employee of the Ministry of Rest and Culture. Scott-King, invited to the ceremonies, which are to coincide with the midsummer vacation, incautiously accepts. The celebration ends in fiasco because a lady-journalist, Martha Bombaum, whose work is syndicated to the newspapers of four continents, exposes it as a fraud, proving, on the authority of Mr. Robert Graves, that Bellorius was not a Neutralian nor even a poet but a Sixth Century Byzantine general. Scott-King, who of course knows better, protests, only to be denounced by Miss Bombaum and her friends as a bourgeois escapist, a reactionary cannibal and a Fascist beast. The Minister of Rest and Culture is disgraced, deposed and banished to the islands; the foreign savants are left to shift for themselves. Scott-King's funds are running low; prices in the new Neutralia are fixed high by the State to encourage industry and hard work; transportation home is impossible because of priorities; the British legation is coldly indifferent to his predicament.

Thus Scott-King becomes one of the vast European army of displaced persons, and enters upon the fantastic adventures which end many hundreds of miles from Neutralia in a British concentration camp for illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine; there, as a prisoner, he is recognized and rescued by a soldier to whom he had once taught Greek. When he returns to his school for the new term, the headmaster informs him that enrollments for classical studies have shrunk still further, and suggests that, since parents are now concerned merely with having their children fitted for jobs in the modern world, Scott-King consider teaching some additional subject, say, economic history. He refuses. "I think", says Scott-King, "it would be very wicked indeed to do anything to fit a boy for the modern world."

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